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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [RW](#) [CG](#) [KE](#) [XA](#)  
SUBJECT: US AMBASSADOR TO DRC VISITS RWANDA

REF: A. 05 KIGALI 1404

- [1](#)B. KIGALI 0004
- [1](#)C. TD-314/17379-06
- [1](#)D. KINSHASA 000358

Classified By: Poloff GLearned. Reasons 1.4(b/d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. US Ambassador Meece visited Rwanda March 2-4. Highlights of the visit included a stop at Mutobo Demobilization Camp; a meeting with National Security Service (NSS) Secretary General Ndahiro; and a meeting with Foreign Minister Murigande and Ambassador Sezibera, Special Envoy for the President to the Great Lakes. Discussions with the Foreign Minister focused on relations between the GDRC and GOR; the security outlook in eastern Congo; the Congolese political process; eastern Congo trade issues; and the future of the Tripartite Plus. Although Murigande acknowledged that the relationship between the two governments has improved over the last three years, he stressed that the Tripartite Plus still plays an important role in improving the political situation in the Great Lakes Region. Ambassador Meece described the transition government in Kinshasa as generally dysfunctional and likely beset by increasing internal tensions in the run-up to elections. End summary.

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Mutobo and National Security Service  
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[1](#)2. (C) On 2 March, Ambassador Meece crossed from Goma into Gisenyi, met up with Ambassador Arietti, and proceeded to Mutobo Demobilization Camp, located outside of the town of Ruhengeri approximately 120 kilometers from Kigali. The camp, run by the GOR,s Reintegration and Demobilization Commission, had 236 ex-combatants in training, including former Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) commander Seraphin Bizimungu (a.k.a. Brig Gen Amani) (ref A). Ambassadors Meece and Arietti were briefed by Philibert Gakwenzire, Head of the Documentation Department, on the camp, the demobilization and reintegration process and the GOR,s policy on returning ex-combatants (ref B). The Ambassadors also spoke with Amani and some FDLR ex-combatants who had repatriated from the DRC. Upon returning to Kigali, Ambassadors and SIMO met with NSS Secretary General, LtCol Emmanuel Ndahiro (ref C).

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FM on GDRC and GOR Relations  
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[1](#)3. (C) In 3 March meeting with Minister Murigande and

Ambassador Sezibera, Murigande described the relationship between the GDRC and the GOR as much improved, over the last three years. Responding to a question, Murigande asserted that lines of communication between GOR and GDRC were open and utilized. In fact, he mused that Rwandan/Congolese diplomatic contacts were more intense than several other Rwandan regional relationships, possibly as there are more issues to discuss. Murigande noted a decrease in negative rhetoric from GDRC officials and increased contact between high ranking officials but said that it would still take time to establish full normalization, including the exchange of embassies. Murigande expressed hope that the DRC presidential elections will occur on schedule and that the GDRC would turn the page, regarding its attitude towards Rwanda. He said the DRC has had the same problems throughout its history, including the problems with the Mai Mai, and the GOR takes into account the complicated history of the region for context.

14. (C) Murigande said the International Community (IC) should be "encouraged" to increase the pressure on the former Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR)-Interahamwe as it is the largest, most battle hardened group, and represents the biggest security problem in eastern Congo. He reiterated that the GOR considers the Tripartite Plus as an important mechanism for the four countries to discuss regional security issues.

15. (C) Ambassador Meece agreed with the assessment that the FDLR (which Murigande referred to as ex-FAR-Interahamwe) is the largest and most militarily capable negative force in the region, but added that there are a number of threats to both the general security and the upcoming elections. Other groups in fact, such as the Ituri militias, the Jackson8 Mai Mai group, and Laurent Nkunda's troops have created greater disruption to the elections process. He added that available evidence suggests the FDLR leadership has thus far made the decision to not directly threaten the DRC election process. Ambassador Meece said that a more generalized threat to the region is the slow pace of army integration, the related disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) process, and critically important administrative reforms of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC). He observed that these problems will still be around after the elections. He noted the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT) has a unified approach in engaging with the GDRC and, despite a broad range of interests there is agreement on the fundamentals,.

16. (C) Murigande said that he had not heard anything about a possible end to the Tripartite Plus after the elections, he agreed that the challenges would remain after the elections and restated his position that the Tripartite Plus should continue. In response to questions, however, he was vague about what he viewed as the desired objectives or format for the future Tripartite Plus process. Ambassador Arietti noted that the USG recognizes the eastern DRC problems will continue after the elections and emphasized the need to discuss the issues with the Tripartite Plus members while assessing the process and the most helpful way to continue.

17. (C) Ambassador Meece summarized the latest DRC electoral crisis over the territorial status of Minembwe (ref D) and noted that all parties have hardened their positions, making reasonable discussion more difficult and delaying the implementation of the recently adopted election law. Murigande acknowledged the situation as a problem and expressed hope that the CIAT would be able to help with the resolution.

18. (C) Ambassador Arietti noted that it is becoming more important to focus on economic issues as economic development will help both countries. Minister Murigande agreed, stating that the GOR tried to "jump-start talks" to set up an electrical power cooperation. The Minister confirmed, however, that existing Rwanda/DRC/Burundi energy cooperation arrangements continue to function. He said there is free

movement of people and goods due to the "laissez passer" recognized by both countries, but claimed that the GDRC was dragging its feet in further discussions on the tri-border economic cooperative. Ambassador Sezibera added that the IC could help to encourage this trade and noted that economic cooperation is just as important as security. He said that there is an unhelpful tendency by some groups to "criminalize" free trade. (Note. In past discussion with Emboffs, Ambassador Sezibera has been critical of some NGOs and UN panels and organizations as being anti-free trade. End note).

¶9. (C) Ambassador Meece observed that there is a perception in Kinshasa that Rwanda and Uganda benefit from eastern DRC trade at the expense of the GDRC. The GDRC,s existing lack of ability to extend central authority, including the control of borders and revenues, exacerbates the problem and furthers the impression of large-scale illegal activity. Ambassador Meece said trade regulation should be recognized as part of the problems between the two countries but noted that a post-election government will open up options and possibilities that do not now exist.

¶10. (C) Ambassador Sezibera asserted that it was unfair to blame Rwanda for both the illegal actions of individuals in the Kivus and the inability of the of the GDRC to police itself. Ambassador Meece agreed that Rwanda should not be blamed for poor governance by the GDRC and noted that the Sun City accords were not designed to set up an efficient, self-supporting government, but to end the war and initiate a transition process. A part of these arrangements was a deal to allocate Ministerial and other positions, and authority, making coherent decision-making in the Transition problematic at best. Ambassador Arietti added that the budget and capacity limitations of the DRC, eight-two times larger in size than Rwanda, are not conducive to accurately tracking revenue. All agreed that the scale of the problems in the DRC is huge.

ARIETTI